

WASHINGTON POST
7 JUNE 1976

Covert Operations Dominant At CIA, Senate Unit Reports

Associated Press

Covert operations have dominated CIA activities throughout most of its 29-year history at the expense of its intended role of intelligence collection and analysis, according to a Senate intelligence committee staff report.

The emphasis on covert operations, encouraged by U.S. Presidents, resulted in extreme secrecy that allowed such abuses as assassination plots against foreign leaders and drug tests on unsuspecting human guinea pigs to occur, the report added.

The 107-page report entitled "History of the Central Intelligence Agency" was released yesterday as one of the last in a series of volumes issued by the intelligence committee.

When it was created in 1947, the CIA "was intended to produce national intelligence estimates independent of policy biases and to provide direction over the other intelligence organizations to minimize duplication of efforts," the report

said. However, "within two years of its creation the CIA assumed functions very different from its principal mission, becoming a competing producer of current intelligence and a covert operational instrument in the American cold war offensive," it said.

During the 1950s under Allen Dulles the CIA spent more than half its annual budget on covert operations against what policymakers believed was a worldwide Soviet threat, according to the report.

Extreme secrecy affected the quality of intelligence since analysts were denied access to raw data collected by undercover agents in the field, according to the report.

During the 1960s, "paramilitary operations became the dominant CIA clandestine activity" with the agency waging secret wars in Cuba, Laos and Vietnam, it said. Spending on clandestine projects continued to consume more than half the agency budget, it added.

The number of covert operations began to decline near the end of the 1960s, partly as a result of the exposure by Ramparts magazine of CIA funding of student groups and private foundations, the report said. The decline continued into the 1970s as U.S. policy toward Russia changed from confrontation to detente, according to the report.